Man-Woman Relationship in the Select Novels of Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, and Shobha De: A Comparative Study

Synopsis submitted

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August 2016.

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Introduction:

It is famous saying that 'a man is incomplete without a woman.' Man- woman relationship is as old as human existence. It was in olden times a biological necessity. The modern sophistication of it is an addition of civilization. Right from the ancient epics and legends, literary endeavor has been to portray this relationship.

The study of status of woman in India shows that it undergoes fluctuations, as well as rise and fall. In the holy *Quran,* a woman is "described as a fitna, one who tempts man and brings trouble." The *Bible* observes that God formed woman out of the rib of man. In *Vedas*, most of the hymns are attributed to only sons-never to daughters. *Atharva Veda* says: "the birth of a girl grants elsewhere, here grant a son." In the Vedic Period, a woman enjoyed a high status in every field of life just like a man. They had equal rights in selecting partners through "Swayam-Vara", but in Sutra period, the position of woman started declining. They were kept away from sacrificial ceremonies and the study of Veda fell into the hands of men. The only source of knowledge became monopoly of man. Women were circumcised to domestic duties. They lost independence and their protection became the duty of the male of the family. This led to the age-long disparity between man and woman. This continued up to British Administration. Woman went back in the social status. The advancement of the British rule robbed women of their rights to equal status with men. However, the spread of English education and influence of Western Culture made Indian women to realize their importance in society. Ramabai Ranade, Pandita Ramabai, Saroj Nalini played important role in upliftment of women again the valuable service rendered by Vijaya Laxmi Pandit, Sarojini Naidu, stimulated the movements for the cause of womanhood.

If we study the woman in different cultures, both in east and west, we find broken unhappy homes, neglected children, married and unmarried mothers, problems of divorce and prostitution. However, the affection of mothers towards the children, the long life devotion of wife towards her husband is very strong.

In the commentaries on the English constitution and commentaries on the law of England, William Black Stone states, "By marriage, the husband and wife is one person in law, that is, very being or legal existence of the women is suspended during the marriage or at least incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband; under whose wing, protection and cover she performs everything."

In Indian classical literature a woman is always shown in relationship to man. For both men and women in Hindu society, ideal woman has been traditionally personified by Sita. In scriptures and myths woman is shown as a goddess or sub-human creature, not a complete human being but with the change in structure of the society, feminine identity has become expression of feminism in Indian context. Hence, with the rise of feminism, feminine issues and experiences are handled in literature.

Today a woman is not a doll in the hands of man. She is being seen establishing her identity in almost every walk of life.

Title of the Proposed Research:

Realizing the importance of place of woman in male-dominated society, in present times, the researcher has chosen the following topic for her research work entitled "Man-woman Relationship in the Select Novels of Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, and Shobha De: A Comparative Study."

Significance of the Research Work:

The study is important from the following viewpoints:

a. The man-woman relationship is the backbone of the Indian social and cultural phenomena and cardinal source of literary discussion since ancient times. The writers understudy belongs to the modern and post-modern era and through this research, a kind of continuity of the trend will be maintained.

b. The female characters like Maya in Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock*, Jaya in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*, and Karuna in Shobha De's *Socialite Evenings* are life-like characters and represents Indian sense of womanhood in true sense. The present research is an attempt to foreground their relationship with men around them.

c. The three novelists represent feminist aspects from Indian viewpoint to some extent. Their treatment of the male and female characters can pave new way to study the Indian man-woman relationship in Indian English literature in a different way.

d. This research is a way to focus on the inter-related tension that the reader experiences as far as the sense of heightened involvement, uncertainty, and interest in male and female characters in the respective genre are concerned.

e. This research is also useful in bringing out the autobiographical elements and their associations with the respective genre.

Survey of Literature:

Anita Desai:

Most of the previous researchers have concentrated on the style of writing of Anita Desai. They have given importance to the study of imagery in her novels. According to the researcher, other important aspects of her fiction need to be studied. Other researchers have compared Anita Desai with other modern novelists like William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf. In this, writer's imagination plays important role. Most of the researchers have argued that in Anita Desai's work her typical style is important. The researcher will try to find common threads among the women characters in the novels of Anita Desai who hail from all social classes.

The researcher will explore which factors affect the men women relationship in her novels and how they differ according to their different socio-economic background. In her portrayal of female characters, she gives attention to tension between family members and lack of correlation of middle class women in her novels. Some researchers have paid attention to the parentage of Anita Desai that is her German mother and Indian father. They argued that because of the barrage of different cultures her typical mental setup was established. In the research undertaken by the researcher, the aspects that were given importance by other researchers are not taken into consideration. This research is going to concentrate only on male and female interrelationship in the novels of Anita Desai like *Kashmir, Fire on the Mountain, Delhi, and Kolkata, Cry the Peacock, Where shall we go this summer?, Fasting Feasting*. This research is going to concentrate on discovery and identity of the female characters in these novels.

Shashi Deshpande:

Most previous researchers on Shashi Deshpande have concentrated on the cultural background of Shashi Deshpande i.e. she comes from south India and they pay attention to the fact that she is more inclined towards the Brahminical background of her characters and researchers have taken into consideration only her cultural background. They also concentrated on the anguish and conflict of the modern educated Indian women those who are caught between patriarchy and tradition on the one hand and self-expression individuality and independence for the women on the other hand. Researchers have paid attention to the

lives of women in Shashi Deshpande's novels. They are more concerned about their individuality and their independent way of looking at human life. According to other researchers, there are women in her novels that are poverty-stricken and hard working but they are very sincere and silent. Most of the researchers have also given importance to her portrayal of women's sufferings. In the research, which is undertaken here, the researcher will not pay attention to these aspects of the Indian women i.e. only individuality, search for independence and their silent nature.

The researcher will pay attention to the interrelationship of women and men in the novels such as *The Dark Holds No Terrors, That Long Silence, In the Country of Deceit.* This research will focus only on the men-women relationship. Other researchers talk about the displacement of women, the torture of women and humiliation of women. The research undertaken will not pay attention to these aspects but it will only concentrate on the relationship of women with men, which is different and goes on changing according to the educational status and financial status. It will be indicated in this study that both educated and uneducated women suffer in the hands of men and that men give humiliating treatment to poor or rich women alike. This is portrayed in the novels of Shashi Deshpande.

Shobha de:

Almost all previous researchers those who have worked on Shobha De, have concentrated on sensuous aspect in her novels. According to most of the researchers, women in her novels are only the instrument to provide pleasure to men. Most of the researchers almost condemn Shobha de as a writer having lower literary value or less literary interest and they consider her only a popular novelist. Moreover, according to them, her novels are of popular type and are made into films or serials. Researchers seem to be more carried away by her social comments or by her role in the social world. This research will pay attention to relationship of men and women, which is beyond physical aspect, and it is not related only to physical aspect in human life.

The researcher's unique way of looking at men women relationship in the novels of select novelists will create enough scope to arrive at certain new area in research in modern Indian literature. We must look at Shobha de more as a literary novelist, and a serious novelist who creates an external image in her novels like *Socialite Evenings, Starry Nights, Spouse, and Obsession*. She creates external picture of sensuality and gives graphic

description of the relationship of men and women and other glittering images of urban life in Mumbai. However, in research, which is undertaken, the researcher will pay attention to the basic human aspects in man and women relationship, which is present in her novels, which are not given attention by other researchers. The research will attempt to explore how here men and women even though they are modern the researcher would like to look at their relationship with men and women beyond its physical aspect. This will throw different light on Shobha de's personality as a writer and this will project Shobha de as a serious writer on relationship of men and women.

For example the book, "New Lights on Indian Women Novelists in English" edited by Amarnath Prasad is modest attempt to evaluate some of the major women novelists. The book contains many scholarly papers highlighting different aspects of issues of women as well as other Indian issues. The authors discussed are Ruth Prawar Jhabwala, Nayantara sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Rama Mehta, Shobha De etc. The book has proved a great asset to the teachers, scholars, and students.

The part - II of the book, "New Lights on Indian Women Novelists" edited by Amarnath Prasad throws light upon the women issues in the modern period. The scholars have highlighted truthful portrayal of women in conservative and patriarchal society, their critical comments on gender discrimination and above all their strong sense of feminism. It contains more than twenty scholarly articles contributed by well- known scholars hailing from different parts of India.

Aims and Objectives:

Following are the aims and objectives of the research –

1) To trace the man-woman relations in the selected novels of three novelists: Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, and Shobha De.
2) To trace the role of surroundings in making of 'a woman' and 'a man'.
3) To highlight men-women, women-women, and men-men relations in the selected novels.
4) To find the autobiographical element in the concerned novels.
5) To trace the inter-textual relations in the novels understudy.

Hypotheses:

1) In the novels of Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, and Shobha De, there is revolutionary viewpoint about man-woman relationship.
2) In the novels understudy, the characters are involved in free sex to challenge man's superiority.
3) In man-woman relationship, human psyche plays important role.
4) The characters suffer from identity crisis.
5) Economical status affects man-woman relationship.

Research Methodology:

Research Methodology adopted for this research will be interdisciplinary, analytical, and comparative. It would be incorporated in order to bring into focus the selected writer's ideological stand.

Scope of the Study:

The research work is to explore the man-woman relationship of various types like husband-wife, parent-child, brothers-sisters relations, and the relation of this genre. The research work is also to find out solutions to the problems in man-woman relations. The researcher aims at physical, emotional, psychological, and social relations. The work will determine nature of various man-woman relationships in the society. It will focus on causes of intensity of such relations as well as failure if any. It will be helpful to analyze such relation and solve the problems not only for the sake of research work but in real life also. It throws significant light over predicament of woman in India.

Limitation of the Study:

The novelists have written a number of novels but the researcher has selected only three novels of each novelists. The purpose of each novel may be multifold but only man-woman relationship will be focused. Language, diction, and style are excluded. Complete human relationship is not covered in this research work. The atmosphere differs in the novels of different novelists. The researcher tends to find development and variation in the outlook of the novelists understudy. As the writer, in due course of time, is exposed to the vast scenario of experience in life and writing as well.

Tentative Chapter Plan:

The proposed study is based on six chapters.

1] Chapter I: Introduction.

2] Chapter II: Man-woman Relationship in the Novels of Anita Desai.

3] Chapter III: Man-woman Relationship in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande.

4] Chapter IV: Man-woman Relationship in the Novels of Shobha De.

5] Chapter V: A Comparative Study.

6] Chapter VI: Conclusion.

Chapter I: Introduction.

Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, and Shobha De are the three great women writers of India. Anita Desai was born as Anita Mazumdar on June 24, 1937 in Musoorie. She is an Indian novelist and short story writer. Presently, Anita lives in the United States, where she is the John E. Burchard Professor of Writing of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA. Shashi Deshpande was born in 1938. Shashi Deshpande is the Kannada writer who won Sahitya Academy Award for her novel *That Long Silence*. Shobha De was born as Shobha Rajadhyaksha to the Saraswat Brahmin family of Maharashtra on January 7, 1947. She is an eminent, Indian novelist, who is often known as India's Jackie Collins. Presently, she is working as a freelance writer for a couple of newspapers and magazines. These three authors represent Indian feminism to the world from different perspectives and have great impact on the literary world.

The most common themes in Anita Desai's novels are human relationship particularly the man-woman relationship. Nowadays this theme has become more important due to rapid industrialization, growing awareness among women of their rights and individualism and the westernizations of attitudes and lives of the people.

Although Shashi Deshpande rejects her idea of being a feminist, her writing is inclined towards feminism. Shashi Deshpande, in her novels, has tried to project a realistic picture of the middle-class educated women who are financially independent, who represent the contemporary Indian society. Her novels deal with the problems of the adjustments and conflicts in the minds of female protagonists.

Shobha De's novels represent the new Indian woman's voice. A 'New Woman' is in search of self-identity, seeking liberation in all walks of life, replacing the traditional image of Indian woman. She is the celebrity writer and has contributed in her own distinct way to Indian Novel in English. In the present scenario of gender discrimination, a study of these

novels helps to widen and direct our thoughts to relevant problems affecting women in Indian society.

There is one common thread among these three women novelists and that is the type of woman characters found in their novels. They are life-like, represent some specific traits of Indianness and although apparently seem common people, face extraordinary situations with boldness.

Autobiographical elements finds place in the work of three novelists and they are skillfully woven in their works but not without detachment. In the present research, the man-woman relationship in the select novels by the three novelists will be discussed

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Chapter II: Man-woman Relationship in the Novels of Anita Desai.

The researcher has selected following women novelists and their work for her research study.

Anita Desai: Initially, these chapters will deal with bio-literary account of the author understudy, carry out critical study, and choose the following novels for research work.

Cry the Peacock (1963)

Anita Desai is a modern Indo-English writer, widely acclaimed, not only in India but also in the world of fiction writing. The fiction of Anita Desai is relevant to all times because she writes about the predicament of modern man. Her real concern is the exploration of human psyche, so man-woman relationship brings characters into alienation, withdrawal, loneliness, isolation, and lack of communication that frequently occurs in her novels.

Most of her novel's protagonists are alienated from the world, from society, from families, from parents and even from their own selves because they are not average people but individuals. When these characters have to face alienation, they become rebels. Tension, worries, depression, disappointment, anxiety, and fear become their lot and they lose their sense of sanity and mental poise.

The uniqueness of Anita Desai's fiction lies in her treatment of feminine sensibility. In India where women have redesigned role which does not allow any room for individualism, identity and assertion. Anita Desai talks of women who question the age-old traditions and want to seek individual growth. Most of her protagonists are alienated ones. She portrays her characters as individuals "facing single handed, the ferocious assaults of existence".

Cry the Peacock is Anita Desai's first novel. This novel has been hailed by many critics as significant achievement in the realm of Indian English fiction. The novel *Cry the Peacoc*k is mainly concerned with the theme of disharmony between husband and wife relationship. Desai looks into the reasons for marital discord and illustrates how such discord affects the family. Sometimes, the inability of an individual to be responsive to the behavior patterns of her partner leads to strain and tension in the relationship. In this novel Maya and Gautama have strained relationships because of their incompatible temperature. Maya is dreamy, sensitive, and emotional, while Gautama realistic, insensitive, and rational. Maya has tenderness, softness and warmth, Gautama is hard and cold. The matrimonial bonds that bind the two are very fragile; the growing tension between them reaches its climax when Maya kills Gautama and then commits suicide.

Maya feels that Gautama does not appreciate the emotional value of her desire and grief and as such finds the gulf between their relationship widening. There is no denying fact that Maya herself is responsible for her alienation from him but certainly, Gautama aggravates this loneliness by adopting different attitude. In the very first chapter when Gautama is working on his papers, he pays no heed to "either the soft willing body or the lovely wanting mind that waited near the bed". Her loneliness is further externalized when she expresses her desire to release the encaged monkey and bars. There is no place for Maya in the world of Gautama. He neither understands her nor wishes her to enter her world.

Where Shall We Go This Summer? (1975)

Anita Desai chooses marital discord as the subject matter of this novel and highlights how the inability to lay bare one's soul and express freely one's fear and anguish result in the snapping of communication between husband and wife. Different attitudes, individual complexes, and fears add to this distancing between the husband and the wife resulting in conjugal disharmony.

Raman and Sita have irreconcilable temperaments and attitudes to life. The ill-assorted couple of Raman and Sita are confronted with the same problem of husband-wife discord. Sita represents a world of emotion and feminine sensibility while Raman is a man with an active view of life and the sense of the practical.

Sita is a nervous, sensitive middle-aged woman with explosive and emotional reactions to many things that happen to her, she always wants to escape reality and does not want to grow up and face the responsibilities of adult life. On the contrary, Raman represents the prose of life.

He represents sanity, rationality and an acceptance of the norms and values of society. He is unable to understand the violence and passion with which Sita reacts against every incident. His reaction to his wife's frequent outbursts is a mixture of puzzlement, weariness, fear and finally a resigned acceptance of her abnormality. He cannot comprehend her boredom, her frustration with her.

In this novel theme of alienation and lack of communication in married life is discussed by writer. Sita finds herself alienated from her husband and children. She remains an ignored personality since childhood. She is the product of broken family. She yearns to have the attention and love of others but her father remains busy with his chelas and patients. Even after marriage, she remains lonely. Her husband also is busy. He fails to fulfill her expectation. As a result, there is marital discord, tension between husband and wife.

Fasting, Feasting (1999)

The setting of the novel is both India and the United States. The main characters live in a small town in India. The future of the child is decided by regional traditions and customs. For girls marriage is a destiny and boys can take as much education as they wish. In the story family's elder daughter, Uma spends her life as per the guidelines of parents, whereas many efforts are done for Arun's education for better future.

It was Uma's deep wish to continue education but she was dropped from the convent school to take care of her brother Arun and the family members. Afterwards Arun was sent to United States for further education where the household chores were Uma's lifetime duties. Because of restrictions, her slave mind failed in all duties given to her, such as cooking, studying, or becoming a wife. Uma's two arranged marriages ended in a failure. It affected the marriage of younger sister Aruna, who was beautiful and able girl. As per the tradition, Aruna could not get married until Uma was married. At last, Aruna's marriage was planned. Uma was attracted towards a widow aunt named Meera Masi who encouraged Uma for spiritual and religious education.

Chapter III: Man-woman Relationship in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande.

Initially, this chapter will deal with bio-literary account of the author understudy, carry out critical study, and choose the following novels for research work.

The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980)

Shashi Deshpande has many avatars and award winning Indian Novelist. She fights for the recognition of women as individuals. As a writer possessing deep insight into the female psyche, her novels reveal the man-made patriarchal traditions and uneasiness of the modern Indian woman in being a part of them.

To present the world of mothers, daughters and wives is also to present indirectly the fathers, sons and husbands the relation between men and women, and between women themselves. Her young heroines rebel against the traditional way of life and patriarchal values. She writes about the situation of women and their failures in the fast changing socio-economic milieu of India. She writes about the conflict between tradition and modernity in relation to women in middle class society.

As in, the, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* the novel portrays of man's unquestionable superiority to order woman and woman as a martyr and full of virtues. It speaks about the problem face by working woman, Sarita (Saru) who is a doctor and at night a terrified trapped animal in the hands of her husband, Monahar (Manu).

To analyze Saru's character, it would be better first to reduce it to simple facts. Saru is an unwanted child. Her brother's death makes her all the more unwanted. She is on perpetual war with her mother who could never forgive her for being alive when her brother was dead. Saru questions herself 'Why was I alive?' Her father is more or less a non-entity growing in this environment of hatred and lovelessness, Saru nurtures seeds of rebellion within her. She joins medical college against the will of her mother.

Being unwanted, she loses the basic satisfaction every human being needs. Later on, she marries mainly due to a sense of rebellion. She married Manu because her parents opposed the marriage. As time passes, her involvement in her profession, lack of communication with her husband, difference in social status, (she being a doctor and Manu being a 'master') distance her from Manu mentally. The old flame of regard and care is extinguished. The monster comes out when a female journalist asks him as to how it feels when the wife is the breadwinner of the family. That night, he ruins her physically and psychologically. He turns out to be brutal sadist. He is a man with two completely different personalities. In the morning, he is the normal, chatty husband and has completely forgotten his animality that he has been showing during nights.

Therefore, for the world, she is a lady doctor with a loving husband and two lovely kids but in reality, she is a victim of the unkindest cut of all. This duplicity of her life has been killing and choking her real self. She tries hard to overcome her psychological fears.

The Dark Holds No Terrors, The terrors are inside us all the time. We carry them within us and like traitors they spring out, when we least expect them, to scratch and maul".

That Long Silence (1988)

Shashi Deshpande in her novel *That Long Silence*, on one level presents the condition of the woman in Indian society, her role model and how the different types of women act out their roles with their silence. The title emphasizes the silence that the protagonist Jaya wishes to break and to search her own-self and wife role. At another level, she examines the role of Sita, Gandhari, and Maitreyee at still another level, it is the modern convent educated English speaking woman who entangles into the darkness of life. She is dissatisfied with her role model in marriage.

Shashi Deshpande reveals the inner world of both Jaya and Mohan when they face the crisis in their lives. They have run into a stormy weather and their secure sheltered life washes away like watercolor in a rainy storm. The disaster they face affects them differently and they react differently. Mohan is dismissed from his office, for his malpractice. Mohan feels that Jaya, who no longer cares for him because of the crisis in his life. He expects that Jaya should speak positively and help him because of the crisis in his life. Jaya on the other hand reacts differently. Her whole life revolved around the wants of her husband.

The two of them are as if in 'aranya' as like Rama and Sita. However, Jaya is totally changed. She is not Sita. During their crisis they are staying in her 'Dada's house'. This homecoming makes her to review her life, examine her inner self and her relationship with Mohan. She no longer wishes to revolve around Mohan, as in the past. As she has given up writing for the newspaper column "Seeta". Therefore, she wants to give up her traditional role model of wife. She emerges through the tension between her two worlds as a determined strong willed modern woman who is prepared to face the life, accept her responsibilities squarely and not escape from or avoid them. Deshpande's use of myths of Seeta, Gandhari, and Maitreyee sharply focuses the plight of the West.

There was the time when the Indian woman was considered as a 'Pativarata', a 'Sati' and something that has to be protected by man. Now she has changed. She is aware of the stirrings of her conscience, her quest, her identity, her individuality, her place and role in the family and society.

In The Country of Deceit (2008)

The novel throws light over different life style, which condemns the universal crime beyond redemption in a common manner. We the readers wonders at this attitude of the people- is it crime of love or that of deceit? There is a question in our mind what we have been taught and coming up with a new definition of happiness that finishes and consumes them.

Devyani is a central character who breaks all norms in search of happiness. Devyani inclined towards illicit relationship with a married IPS officer, Ashok Chinnappa. The relationship is a proof to be oases in the desert of her life. Her life was full of gloom and sadness. We scarify happiness for the sake of reputation but Shashi Deshpande points that deceiving the world is wrong but deceiving owns self is a sin. The dilemma of the protagonist is highly realistic. Savi, the sister is a sign of preconceived notions about adultery and marriage. Sindhu the maternally aunt is a blending of tradition and progress.

Chapter IV: Man-woman Relationship in the Novels of Shobha De.

Initially, this chapter will deal with bio-literary account of the author understudy, carry out critical study, and choose the following novels for research work.

Socialite Evenings (1988)

Shobha De is one of the famous feminist writers of this modern era. Her works gained popularity due to the bold depiction of fair sex and women's particularly feminine pursuits and attitudes. This is the greatest protest against male dominated society where women are denied freedom to act according to their will and continue to cherish their own dreams in futility. Due to social conflict and ideological struggle, the role of women in the society has been changing with each decade of the century have left a great influence on sexual ways and social codes of the prevalent society and the same is embodied by Shobha De in her characters. Her women characters are no more have slaves or mere helpmates at home. In her novels, she mirrors her own feminists and sexist mindset. Her women are more remarkable than men are. Men-women relationship is presented as almost hollow, intellectual, and compromising, resulting in to the shattered men-women image. Even then, the woman needs a companionship of man in order to satisfy her natural urge. So De's daring women establish extra-marital relationship in order to get rid of rigid marital frame work. These women are not hesitant in using sex as calculated strategy to gain social and financial benefits. Even they easily outplay their male counterpart with better control in their attitude, desire, and

expression. They revolt against traditional image of Indian women. In fact, they represent the emerging liberated Indian women. In one of her novels 'Socialite Evenings' De's protagonist gets fed up with her husband's attitude and his compulsive socializing and says, "Men like dogs could be conditioned through reward and punishment." (87)

De's novels are supposed to be a creative endeavor to shatter patriarchal hegemony. She insists that she writes with great empathy towards women without waving feminist flag, for she strongly feels about the women's situation. She prefers dwelling deeper in the character or scene. De's novels have emphasized the values of different socio-economical set up and value of equivalence of power. Whenever this balance collapses, there is a tension in society, hence hypocrisy dominates. There is a revolt against harsh realities of patriarchal society. There is a hint at growing awareness among the women who have begun to rise from eternal slumber.

Socialite Evenings is Shobha De's first novel. Karuna the protagonist of this novel was in her childhood days a problem child both at home and at school. She refused all the traditional ways that come in the way of total development of women. As she grows up in age, there develops emotional urge to identify herself with the out-side world the modern crowd and the girls of her age who had everything as per their wish in their life.

Throughout the novel Karuna's feminine psyche develops through protest and defiance. Her marriage was a failure, it was loveless and joyless. There was no understanding between the husband and wife, so Karuna feels that she married a wrong man, for the wrong reasons at the wrong time.

Socialite Evenings gives us the picture of the marginalization of Indian women at the hands of their husbands. Simone de Beauvoir expresses his own views on man. Woman nexus-man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general, whereas woman represents only the negative, defines by limiting criteria without reciprocity. (Seldom, 1988:534)

Starry Nights (1991)

Starry Nights was De's second and the most controversial novel, is the story of the struggle and survival of a woman in a sex-starved society. It is the story of a beautiful film star Asha Rani, who comes from a small town to the tinsel world of Bombay and after struggling, she becomes a star. Her father was a renowned film producer in Madras but he had left his wife and two daughters.

To survive, her mother pushes her into the underworld of blue films. For the sake of money, her mother uses her fifteen-year-old daughter, forcing her to be the bedmate of producers and distributors.

She is scared of seedy people who are making the film. She breaks into tears, but she cannot do anything against her mother's command: "Amma please don't, I'm so scared… How can I take off my clothes in front of all these strangers?" Amma… Said patiently, "Think of it like going to the doctor's … Haven't so many doctors seen your body? Examined it? They see bodies all the time… Beside that, man will not really do anything. I mean, it is all acting." (53-54)

In order to earn money, her mother takes her to Bombay. With the help of a small time producer Kishanbhai and her voluptuous figure, she is able to get a film contract. Asha's downfall begins as she rises in her career. Beautiful with a perfect an appealing figure, she finds herself in the hands of Kishanbhai. He first exploits her physically, but later on finds himself in love with her. Rani's mother compels her to please big personalities of cinema in order to get good roles. Asha grows with a disguised feeling of hatred of men.

Asha was betrayed by Akshay. Therefore, she tries to find peace in her relationship with Abhijit. However, Abhijit's father offers a big amount to Asha for leaving his son. Asha at once agrees because she was in love with only Akshay. She marries one of her admirers Joy Phillips. He afterwards had an affair with his daughters Nanny. Her married life became a failure. At last, Asha decides to bring her daughter to India to give her all comforts of life.

To, conclude, Shobha De's *Starry Nights* is a story of a film star, Asha Rani, who chooses the way of struggling. During her period as a film star, she comes under so many difficulties, yet she never leaves in glittering world of cinema, so miserable that it can shatter the moral values of any human being.

Yet Asha Rani struggles and achieves success. Shobha De, in this novel, criticizes the realistic picture so hypocrisy of the filmy people who come from higher society. They try to conceal their real personalities with money and power. In this novel, Shobha De discusses love and sex frankly. Above all the novel depicts the modern woman's search for identity in a male-dominated society.

Spouse (2005)

Shobha De's *Spouse* is a hard critical insight on marriage. It has given different literary identity to De who was known as seller of sex. She has laid open the hypocrisy of Indian marriages. The novel is based on her personal experiences as well as observation of

marital relationships of friends and acquaintances. There is a conversation on selfishness in marriage with the thoughts such as self-centered, self-absorbed.

"Self, self, self. It is this four-letter word," De says", which determines the quality of what I consider the single most difficult, challenging, exhilarating relationship in the world."

Shobha De believes that the institution of marriage is in danger and for many couples, marriage is a farce. It does not give experience of heaven but a living hell. She has supported her idea with a number of examples. She has covered the issues that play important role in a married life with reference to male-ego in-laws, marital fights, bad marriage, unlawful relationship, and the tricks played by the couples. The issue of sex is handled cleverly with understanding.

Chapter V: A Comparative Study

This chapter would also critically analyze the creative stance taken up by these writers manifesting their critiques of patriarchal system in their highly and the individualistic styles. Insight from feminist theories, gender, and cultural studies will also be borrowed here.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

The study will throw light on the challenges in Indian society as far as the man-woman relationship is concerned. These women novelists and their select novels will help to bring out the social and cultural problems in traditional, Indian society that are responsible for the tension between man and woman in their day-to-day life. The study will create the possibility of further research in this area. This will also help the building of modern India to face the challenges of 21st century. Women are the foundation of progress of any country. Therefore, the research will be useful in the academic field.

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